

Draft Minutes

Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission (AARRC)

Annual Retreat – August 28, 2010

At the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Board Room

Members in Attendance: Robert Camille, Chair; Jerry Vehaun; Ben Teague; Ricky Silver; Jerry Sternberg; Patti Torno; Karl Koon; Joe Ferikes; S. Miller Williams; Denise Snodgrass; Robert Griffin

Staff in Attendance: City Manager Gary Jackson; Riverfront Coordinator Stephanie Monson; Secretary- Jessica Dunlap

1. Welcome: **Chairman Robert Camille began the meeting at 9:10am**

2. Introduction and Orientation

Margaret Henderson, meeting facilitator from the School of Government, began the meeting and introduced herself to the AARRC committee.

- Margaret Henderson stated that the purpose of today's retreat is to figure out how the committee wants to work together, how the committee wants to communicate, and what formal and informal policies you would like to formulate to be a successful and effective working group
- Ms. Henderson stated that this is an important planning group because rivers are unique in planning and they are unique in their symbology:
 - **They offer an indication to the flow of life in an area, forge passageways, make boundaries, are ever-changing, can be moody, give or deny access, and can lend to the creative**
 - Rivers create **commerce, careers, history, hobbies, relationships, prosperity and power**
- Ms. Henderson encouraged the Committee to think about which of these positions you hold about the river area, and why you might agree or disagree with others in this discussion because of these values
 - This is important at the 30,000 foot level, 10,000 foot level and street level perspectives
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3. Introductions and Expectations of Committee Members

Ms. Henderson held a round robin introduction for AARC Members:

- Robert Camille – Mr. Camille would like to see the affordability aspect in the river development stay there, so that people who live there can stay there. He stated that the flooding problems in that area will be big issues and disjointed properties will need to be addressed. He believes that the vibrancy of downtown can spill into the river district and create social places for people to gather.
- Ricky Silvers – Mr. Silvers believes this is a great untapped economic resource and thinks using the river as economic engine and platform for future generations will be a valuable tool.
- Pattiy Torno – Ms. Torno stated that she has lived on Riverside Dr for 8 years and the basic issues such as crime and other socioeconomic issues are ones that need to be addressed. She stated these can be addressed by creating community and repopulating in the area by providing jobs an infrastructure for young people, in the context of larger community.
- Jerry Vehaun – Mr. Vehaun stated that he sees a lot of potential in Woodfin that is undeveloped on the river, and working with Asheville on development as a joint venture.
- Karl Koon – Mr. Koon stated that there are many existing buildings in disrepair that are privately owned. Mr. Koon relayed his interest in the commission's role with private property rights of individuals and the importance to make policy recommendations that are this inclusive of these property owners.
- Ben Teague –Mr. Teague stated that the river district can be a unique hub of activity and will continue to attract people across the country. Mr. Teague agreed that encouraging jobs for all and facilitating development in the area would be beneficial. He continued that this could be accomplished by basic building blocks of safety and being prepared for future development and incentivizing developers with 'carrots' in the future.
- S. Miller Williams – Mr. Williams stated that the riverfront can be the great infill project of Asheville and be an essential fabric for economic development in Asheville area.

- Joe Ferikes – Mr. Ferikes stated that the riverfront is the next great downtown for Asheville and it is a terrible shame that it is in the state that it is in today. He believes the most important cog to improve the area is improving the transportation and infrastructure to get in and out of the area.
- Jerry Sternberg – Mr. Sternberg stated that he did not want to be a naysayer, but he encouraged the group to think in a linear fashion and have a linear objective. He continued that if that does not happen, and the group does not work hard to hammer out the details now in a linear and concise manner, then opportunities will be lost and a lot of people will be upset with a lack of results.
- Denise Snodgrass – Ms. Snodgrass stated she appreciates the importance of the area to the city and would like to find a way to honor its history. She recommended a mixed-use and mixed income development with good design standards will bring a dynamic balance and sustainability to the area.
- Robert Griffin – Mr. Griffin stated that much like the Biltmore Village Development Plan, he appreciates the building the sense of community to avoid sprawl; He is pro-guideline but the need to take into account the reality of the identities of the 'zones' for artists and industrial needs. He continued that he believes there are ways to develop in floodplain and he encouraged the committee to recognize what kind of development they want to prevent future problems.

4. Group Discussion – Naming and Managing Currents in River

- The AARRC members discussed Chattanooga, TN and their river development project, possibly making contacts with individuals there to discuss their project plan, and how it was similar and different to the river district in Asheville.
- The AARRC members discussed importance of the railroad to the area and individual experiences with Norfolk Southern and railroad staff in general.
- Meeting Facilitator Margaret Henderson clarified that this commission does not have the capacity to make decisions, only make recommendations.

- City Manager Jackson confirmed this statement
- Ms. Henderson reminded the AARRC committee that they are set with an amorphous task
 - Ms. Henderson reviewed the ground rules:
 - Stay engaged even if issue is not your issue
 - Don't take off on tangents – stay focused on the generic issue at hand and not what is connected to it on the side
 - Focus on interests, not positions (answer the “why”)
 - Share all relevant information (even if it is the elephant information)
 - Stay focused; this will help with linear thinking
- Ms. Torno stated that she is pleased that how much in agreement the AARRC committee is so far.
- City Manager Jackson stated that Asheville City Council is looking for recommendations on future policies for the area with chorus of voices so that they can be proactive with sound advice and a shared vision on what needs to happen next. He continued that City Council believes this is the best group for building consensus and establishing collaboration/a sense of unity for the riverfront
 - Mr. Teague asked Mr. Jackson if the AARRC is setting a vision
 - Mr. Jackson responded that the AARRC is not setting a vision, but rather taking a unique perspective, with existing plans, and determining how to take it to the next level.
- Robert Griffin stated that AARRC needs to figure out what we need to do and what it's going to look like when it's finished.
- The group discussed common issues that were threads in the individual introductions, and how to address these issues as a group effectively
- Jerry Sternberg suggested that the AARRC break out in subcommittees and then modify objectives at each meeting.
- Ms. Henderson asked the AARRC members if there is any value expressed on the flip charts that sticks out for everyone
 - Physical Construction (R. Griffin)
 - Greenway (R. Griffin) –
 - intentional design

- People friendly design (Teague)
- Access (Snodgrass)
 - physical/economic
- Making river area attractive (Williams)
 - physical attractiveness
- Socioeconomic access (Torno)
- Coordinate with existing plans (Snodgrass)

SECTION II

5. Charting Past and Future

Ms. Henderson opened up the section after the break to review Timelines

- Stephanie Monson spoke about the posters, different projects in the area and timelines for the projects:
 - There are about six (6) Level II or III riverfront development projects submitted to the Planning Department of the City of Asheville, but they have not been actualized, likely due to lack of funding
 - Renovations of buildings by business owners, usually Level I projects, are typical current projects underway such as 99 Riverside Drive/Old Wood Company
- Ms. Monson reviewed the timeline:
 - The Riverfront plan is different than the Wilma Dykeman plan in that it addresses concept plans in certain specific (parcel level) areas
- Ms. Monson reiterated that as a City of Asheville employee, she knows about City projects, but not about Woodfin or Riverlink projects
- Ms. Monson reviewed Current, year 1, 3, 10, and 10+ projects on the timeline
 - The main issue is that currently there is no dedicated governmental funding for the Wilma Dykeman RiverWay, , particularly for the NCDOT portions (River Arts District does have current funding to 30% construction drawings)
 - There is nothing in the City CIP for this

- There are piecemeal allocations for projects; for example, the Clingman streetscape is \$900K project and this has been transformational for one area
- Ms. Snodgrass stated that there are resources at Riverlink who have access to a map of Wilma Dykeman (RiverWay Master Plan) and can produce a map with all the areas outlined by Ms. Monson
- Ms. Henderson asked Stephanie Monson to clarify what she can and cannot do for the committee.
 - Ms. Monson clarified that she will consistently record what staff is asked to do and whether or not current staff has the resources to accomplish this, and reporting back on this to the Commission; Monson does not have 100% of her time at the City dedicated for Riverfront Redevelopment only; other agencies in the partnership have and will likely to continue to grow their level of assistance to the Commission
- Mayor Jerry Vebaun stated that Woodfin's future will depend on what this group decides
 - Greenway funding has been applied for the Woodfin riverfront area
- Ben Teague asked if the plans that are in place offer complete coverage, or do they offer complete success for the objectives of the committee?
 - Do we need to reevaluate our list of successes (referring to the list on the notepad) in light of current plans

Off agenda – please note that corresponding numbers correspond to agenda items

7. AARRC Focus Discussion

There was group discussion about needs in the area and current plans, as well as how to tackle the group's understanding of these plans in the area context.

- There was group consensus that a meeting to discuss the Wilma Dykeman RiverWay (WDRW) Master Plan would be beneficial
 - Ms. Henderson clarified that the group would at sometime in the future like to have a focused meeting to look at this plan to see at what this plan might do for the River area

- Miller Williams stated that he would like to have a meeting to understand the flood plain issue.
 - Ms. Monson stated that McCray Coates would be good representative from the City
- Ms. Torno suggested having break out groups as a future planning measure and inviting people from these groups to be ex officio members
 - Norfolk Southern
 - ABTech/UNCA
 - Biltmore Estate
- Ms. Torno suggested that the whole group be familiar with the Riverfront Design Committee guidelines, as well as city codes that we should know so that we know what to expect
- Mr. Silvers suggested that the AARRC have a meeting on Financing and where the money is available?
- Ms. Torno suggested a presentation from Land of Sky on Brownfields
- Mr. Griffin also suggested a meeting regarding city ordinances
- Joe Ferikes stated that a focused meeting will require committees meeting prior several times a month and pick areas that each AARRC Committee member can do, and then give a 10 minute presentation at each meeting to be more productive
 - We need to define those committees today
- Mr. Silvers suggested that the AARRC members take the items discussed and put them in a bucket and form committees
- Ms. Torno suggested that each subcommittee can make a presentation and package it for efficient use of the whole committee's time to inform everyone on how to make a recommendation
 - She recommended that the members set up tasks now to come back with information at the next meeting
- The group discussed which 'buckets' should be formed, what topics should go into each.
- Mr. Teague suggested that these buckets also relate to the various Council Committees such as Public Safety, Economic Development, Planning and Development, and Finance for example.

- Mr. Miller also recommended an Enterprise or Outreach component
- Ms. Monson concluded the section by suggesting a Housing and Community component to be considered

SECTION III

7. Ms. Henderson recapped the organizational structure discussed by the committee:

ADHOC GROUP		PRESENTATION DATE/MEMBERS	EXAMPLES OF TOPICS
Finance		DECEMBER 9TH, 2010	public finance- TIF- bonds- private investment- phasing- grants - lending environment
Ad hoc Chair		Ben Teague	
Ad hoc Vice Chair		Miller Williams	
		Jan Davis	
		Robert Camille	
		Joe Ferikes	
Planning		JANUARY 13TH, 2011	flood hazard areas- current development standards- fill, no fill- other relevant plans- zoning- current infrastructure- transportation
Ad hoc Chair		Robert Griffin	
Ad hoc Vice Chair		Karl Koon	
		RDDRC Chair (vacant)	
		Jerry Vehaun	
		Denise Snodgrass	
Development		NOVEMBER 11TH, 2010	partner relations- environmental and social/cultural assets- existing and new businesses- housing
Ad hoc Chair		Pattiy Torno	
Ad hoc Vice Chair		Jerry Sternberg	
		Bill Stanley	
		Ricky Silver	

- Ms. Henderson stated that the chairs of each will connect with Stephanie Monson
 - Inform Ms. Monson of meeting dates and times via e-mail
 - Ms. Monson can come to the first meetings
 - Ms. Henderson reminded the committee to be explicit if you want Monson or other staff resources there at the meeting
- Ms. Monson provided agenda reminders for the next few months:
 - September Agenda
 - Jay Swain and Ricky Tipton update from DOT
 - River Arts District Transportation Improvements/Preliminary WDRW work
 - October
 - LOS Brownfield's update
 - WDRW- update
 - The committee presentation dates are outlined above in the chart

8. Key Expectations and Resource Allocation

The group discussed some specifics regarding group work, providing the "Cliff's notes" version of a report back to the Commission as well as providing an extended reading list for those AARRA members who would like to do further research.

- It was a committee consensus to not develop or define a mission or vision statement at this time
- The group discussed having an elevator speech, such as "development and sustainability of the Riverfront"
- Ms. Henderson recapped what the AARRC members have accomplished:
 - Cross-pollination with other community groups,
 - Sub-Committee group buckets formed
 - Basic expectations are established
- The committee agreed that the majority/quorum rules on voting matters

The members discussed resource allocation from different agencies, and they agreed that if a member's specific agency might be of help in the

future, to remind them of the committee's work and how the agency can help

6. I-26 Discussion

It was a committee consensus to move the I-26 discussion to the committee discussions, and have the small groups meet today to get organized

9. Margaret Henderson led the self-evaluation and next steps discussion:

- Bad:
 - Too early on a Saturday morning for the meeting
- Good
 - Chamber meeting room – this is a great location
 - Facilitation was excellent
 - A lot was accomplished today – We should have fewer, longer meetings more often
 - Wi-fi is good to have in the meeting room
 - Keep having meat to discuss in next meetings
 - Humor is good – keeping it light but successful

There was no public comment

The meeting adjourned at 1:46pm.

Next meeting is Thursday, September 9, 2010 at Chamber of Commerce at 5:30 p

9/9/2010 10:51:00 AM

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